

A Work Project presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in
Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS AND PREFERENCE FOR WELL-DEFINED TASKS

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Abstract

I investigate the impact of feeling financially constrained over the preference for defined tasks. I hypothesized that inducing these feelings would lead to a preference for well-defined job tasks to compensate for the perceived lack of personal control that these constraints generate. I tested this hypothesis in a lab experiment. Building upon prior literature, I found that even though feeling financially constrained induces a perceived lack of personal control, no effect over job preference was observed.

Keywords: Financial Constraints, Personal Control, Well-Defined Tasks, Ill-Defined Tasks, Job Preference

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1. Introduction

This work project focuses on the impact that feelings of financial constraints have over the preference for defined tasks. When trying to answer this question, my primary goal is to give companies yet another resource to improve their talent acquisition strategy and position in the recruitment pool.

Focusing on candidates' motivations and preferences and how financial constraint conditions influence these serves the purpose of leveraging their chance of targeting critical human assets through a full acquaintance of their job preferences' stimuli, allowing the firm to operate upon motivation and crucial capabilities. If attained, these findings could be applied in the early stages of the recruiting process in which, for example, companies may find it useful to adapt the job descriptions in their recruitment platforms, highlighting the well-defined nature of tasks. This way, companies can also target candidates who may not be as prompt to search for them by feeling financially constrained.

Feelings of Financial Constraints are the extent to which people believe that their financial situation restricts their lives (Tully, Hershfield and Meyvis 2015), impacting many different domains in life. Adding to this, from restricting choices (Botti et al. 2008) to influencing how people assess the environment (Elst et al. 2014), the lack of perceived Personal Control can have pervasive effects in people's lives, namely to what extent they trust in the external environments. Although previous research has occasionally linked the two fields (Hamilton, Mittal, Shah, & Thompson, 2018; Cutright, 2012), literature that explicitly studies the impact of perceived lack of personal control, induced by Feelings of Financial Constraint, over the preference for jobs that limit uncertainty is still scarce.

Therefore, by resorting to a quantitative approach in one study, the added value of this work project also attempts to shed new light on the topic of perceived lack of Personal Control due to Feelings of Financial Constraints, while at the same time investigating a new dimension.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Financial Constraints

Financial Constraints can be categorized into two main areas: objective and subjective. **Objective Financial Constraints** are related to an evident state of poverty or the absence of money and have been previously linked to numerous adverse effects in life. For example, lower education completion, leading to limited career options (Bapp, Martin and Haezwindt 2005), lower health, and increased psychological distress (O' Campos et al., 2015). However, in an organizational context, the study of Objective Financial Constraints has priorly linked this condition with positive, creative outcomes. When relating these two in the sphere of the project and product development, Scopelliti et al. (2014) and Rosso (2014) proved that working on a budget can increase innovative outcomes.

Subjective Financial Constraints are related to psychological feelings of constraint often reflected in an inability to acquire every desired item (Botti et al., 2008) or on the freedom to do everything one wants in life due to a limited budget. Because subjective Feelings of Financial Constraints refer to the psychological state in which people believe that their financial situation restricts their ability to consume certain items, it isn't necessarily a necessary condition of poverty or absence of money but rather a feeling that the current financial situation does not allow the person to fulfill all desired consumption (Tully, Hershfield and Meyvis 2015). Concerning this last categorization, prior literature has studied the impact that feelings of financial constraints have over the preference for material goods over experiences (Botti et al., 2008) and how people respond to these feelings (Hamilton et al. 2018). Indeed, De Witte (1999) has even linked the sense of financial constraints with a sense of loss of control in life (De Witte 1999). According to the author, feelings of financial constraint make people feel as if they cannot respond effectively to life's events, which generates feelings of uncontrollability (*ibid*). With this in mind, the focus of this work project will be on Subjective Financial Constraints, in

which induction and manipulation are highly relevant. Notwithstanding that the two types of constraint are directly correlated, and for that reason, when trying to induce and manipulate subjective financial constraints, prior literature has relied on asking participants to think about their current financial situation – the mirror of the objective financial constraints (Moreau and Engeset 2016; Tully, Hershfield and Meyvis 2015; Paley, Tully and Sharma 2019).

2.2. Personal Control

Personal Control is considered to be an essential aspect in life as it can help in people's maintenance of emotional stability and adaptability (Thompson 2012). It is defined as the extent to which a person feels that he or she can intentionally generate good events or outcomes and avoid undesired or bad ones (Skinner, Chapman and Baltes 1988; Peterson and Stunkard 1992). Low levels of Personal Control negatively impact well-being (Gabriel et al. 2020), leading to depression, anxiety, and anger (Ross and Mirowsky 2013); and reduces performance and job satisfaction, which may arise from a decrease in the sense of competency (Samani, Abdul Rasid and Sofian 2015). Additionally, it decreases the feeling of structure, which consequently augments a sense of chaos (Stavrova, Pronk, and Kokkoris 2018), the tendency to quit and not solve problems (Strasser 1986; Ross and Mirowsky 1989), and the engagement in unhealthy behaviors or substance abuse. With this in mind, personal control is a crucial influencer of people's psychological and physical well-being.

In line with this impact, various studies have proven that when people do not feel entirely in control of their life, they tend to compensate for this by engaging in control-restorative behaviors. For instance, consumers with low personal control tend to prefer market leaders because this imbues them with a sense of security and agency (Beck, Rahinel and Bleier 2020).

With this in mind, to extend prior research about compensatory control, the current work project will focus on how one seeks structure in the environment and how people respond to it. Kay et al. (2009) suggested that when people feel that their sense of personal control is

endangered, they tend to search for order and support in entities like God and the Government. Paired to this, Cutright (2012) also proved that another way for people to compensate for the loss of personal control is by embracing structure in consumption by seeking explicit boundaries when making purchase decisions.

Consequently, I suggest that another way people will pursue to satisfy the need for structure to compensate for their lack of personal control is by preferring and taking part in jobs that imply well-defined tasks. I hypothesize that feeling financially constrained, which leads to a higher perceived lack of control, will determine a preference for jobs that imply well-defined tasks and are structured. I further unpack this prediction below.

2.3. Job Preferences: Ill-Defined vs. Well-Defined Tasks

Ill-defined tasks are characterized by a complete or partial lack of information to help the employee reach a single solution to the work he or she is intended to perform. Therefore, these tasks often have more than one satisfactory solution and ways to achieve them, making ambiguity one of the pillars of this type of problem-solving. To achieve the desired solution in this context, the employee will frequently have to apply creativity, experiment, and develop multiple ideas – the forces that drive Divergent Thinking (McCrae 1987) – requiring a predisposition for flexibility and uncertainty (Moreau and Engeset 2016). For instance, jobs in the Consulting Industry are based on ill-defined tasks. Undeniably, they involve finding out the problems and opportunities, assessing the options, and providing guidance through different methods (Magerison 1988).

Well-Defined Tasks are sustained in the certainty that the employee will be given full information on the processes required to solve a given task, such as Proceeding Manuals, and the task's goal is known and commonly meets a single correct answer (Moreau and Engeset 2016). To achieve the latter, the employee will regularly apply Convergent Thinking, which is sustained in the principles of speed, accuracy, and logic (Cropley 2006). For example, auditors

rely much on repetitive tasks whose primary goal is a defined solution, which processes to achieve are written, and must comply to rules and standards (Iowa State University of Science and Technology 2012). For this reason, their operations' pillars are well-defined tasks.

2.4. Theory Summary and Hypotheses Development

Given the exact impact that financial constraints can have on one's life and preferences, this work project strives to understand if feelings of financial constraints can also impact the choice for well-structured jobs and defined tasks. More specifically, it will focus on a critical research question that addresses the possibility that inducing feelings of financial constraints may lead people to prefer well-structured job tasks. Paired with this, I will also address two other aspects.

The first is related to the potential impact that moderators have over the relation between feelings of financial constraints and job preference. These moderators are the Need for Cognition - defined as the individual's tendency to participate in and enjoy effortful activities that require much thinking (Cacioppo, Petty and Jarvis 1996) – Traits of Creative Personality, and the current Pandemic situation. Additionally, the findings on the latter can be significant because this situation originated a socioeconomic crisis. In these periods, people often face many challenges, from increased stress to disposable income fluctuations, which, according to the World Health Organization (WHO Regional Office for Europe 2011), negatively affects mental health and a sense of control while promoting feelings of financial constraint.

The second aspect will focus on Hypothesis 2 that links financial constraints with hesitancy in asking for help from others (such as colleagues and supervisors). Vohs, Mead, and Goode (2006), in a study related to the psychological consequences of money, the main actor in Financial Constraints, concluded that money reminders lead to reduced requests for help and helpfulness towards others. Therefore, I will investigate if the same pattern is found when caused by feelings of financial constraint.

More formally, my main hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 1: Feelings of financial constraint lead to a preference for well-defined tasks.

Hypothesis 2: Feelings of financial constraint are positively related to with a hesitancy in asking for help from others.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

In one study, I tested whether inducing feelings of financial constraint would lead to a greater preference for well-defined tasks, which characterize structured jobs.

For this study, I induced feelings of financial constraint by using a previously validated manipulation (Tully, Hershfield, and Meyvis 2015; Paley, Tully and Sharma 2019). Previous research indicates that most participants would feel financially constrained when thinking about their current economic situation, which would, at the same time, reduce their sense of personal control (ibid.).

For this reason, the present study relied on two versions of the same questionnaire. In the version where feelings of financial constraint were induced, the questionnaire began with a reflection exercise about the participant's current financial situation and how they felt that this restricted their life. On the version in which control was given, participants moved directly to the Job Advertisement Exercise. At a certain point of the study, this manipulation's success had to be tested to guarantee the accomplishment of inducing financial constraints instead of giving control.

Another crucial aspect of this study is the analysis of moderators' and mediators' influence over the relationship between feelings of financial constraint.

The mediators correspond to the main aspects that back well-defined and ill-defined tasks, which are, respectively: Predictability and Logical Thinking; Freedom and Creativity. Therefore, and over thirteen statements, I recurred to the following expressions to test for this:

- *Predictability*: “certainty,” “clear,” “unambiguous,” “predictability,” and “avoid ambiguity.”
- *Logical Thinking*: “methodical,” “logical,” “precise,” and “rationality.”
- *Freedom*: “freedom,” “flexibility,” and “autonomous.”
- *Creativity*: “creativity,” “innovative,” and “imagination.”

As for the moderators, the method to evaluate was based on their nature. For the Need for Cognition, the previously tested and validated Six-Item Version of Need for Cognition Scale developed by Coelho, Hanel, and Wolf (2018) was used. Traits of a Creative Personality were measured through statements entailed on a natural inclination for creativity and preference for creative tasks. Finally, the impact of Covid-19 was measured through the short version of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark and Tellegen 1988), adapted to meet the pandemic we are living in, and how participants are coping with it.

Furthermore, I assessed whether feelings of financial constraint would be positively related with a higher hesitancy in asking for others' help. To do this, I included in four statements to be rated the expressions “uneasy,” “hesitant,” “reluctant,” and “not comfortable” to characterize the propensity of asking for help from others (e.g., colleagues or supervisor).

3.2. Procedure

An online questionnaire, created through the Qualtrics platform, was built and distributed with another study as part of the Nova Behavioral Lab. Participants were 214 Master's students who completed the study in exchange for course credits (54.9% Female; $M_{age}=22.83$; $Range_{age}=18-28$; $SD_{age}=1.91$). Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In the financial constraint condition participants answered the following questions (Tully, Hershfield, and Meyvis 2015):

“Now, please describe your current financial situation. To assist you during this reflection exercise, you may consider the answers to the following questions in your description:

Do you have to be careful with how you spend your money? Do you sometimes feel as though you cannot spend your money on what you want? Would you consider yourself financially constrained? Would you consider yourself financially comfortable? Do you feel as though you have the financial resources to live the way you want?” and “Please list the aspects of your daily life and spending decisions that are affected by your current financial situation.”

Secondly, participants reported the extent to which they felt capable of doing what they wanted to, and how they felt in control of their life considering their financial situation (2 7-point bipolar items, respectively: 1 = *I can never do what I want*, 7 = *I can always do what I want*, and 1 = *Not in control at all*, 7 = *Completely in control*).

Participants in the control condition did not answer these questions. All participants completed the following battery of questions. Firstly, participants imagined as vividly as possible that they were looking for a job and found two different openings for the same position in their preferred industry and department.

These two job openings were similar in terms of hierarchy position, number of hours, and salary, but differed in terms of tasks. “Job 1” included ill-defined tasks, and “Job 2” included well-defined tasks as defined in Moreau and Engeset (2016). Specifically, participants saw the following job descriptions:

Job 1

- *Your day-to-day job consists of focusing on tasks that allow you to achieve the company’s monthly goals. The goals are general enough to allow your own take on them. Moreover, the path to achieving these goals and the processes involved are not fixed nor predetermined; you need to figure these out on your own.*
- *In the process of achieving your goals, you need to continually explore and experiment with possible solutions/desired end results until reaching a final solution/end result that you deem suitable.*
- *Many of the challenges in your job will require you to think outside the box in the search for novelty and unconventionality.*

Job 2

- *Your day-to-day job consists of focusing on tasks that allow you to achieve the company's monthly goals. The monthly goals that the company assigns to you are fixed and predetermined ones. The processes and operations to achieve these goals are known and described in a step-by-step fashion in a "Procedures Manual."*
- *In the process of achieving your goals, the tasks you will be performing will lead you to achieve a single predetermined and correct solution/desired end results.*
- *Many of the challenges in your job will require speed, accuracy, and logical thinking."*

Participants indicated the Job they would most likely apply to and evaluate the degree of preference and confidence behind this preference. The former was measured through the Multiple-Choice Question *"For which job advertisement would you most likely apply to"* with a single answer: *"Job 1"* or *"Job 2."* The latter were measured through 2 percentage scales, respectively: 0 = *I 100% prefer Job 1*, 50 = *I am indifferent or undecided between Job 1 and Job 2*, 100 = *I 100% prefer Job 1*; and 0 = *0% confident*, 100 = *100% confident*.

Participants were then asked to rate how happy they would be performing Job 1 (ill-defined) and Job 2 (well-defined), using 7-point bipolar scales (1 = *Very unhappy*, 7 = *Very happy*). Adding to this, two statements, one for each Job, on how much the participant agreed that his/her job would have meaning were presented and measured through a 7-point bipolar scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*).

After this, participants were asked to rate the four statements related to the propensity in asking for help from others by using a 7-point bipolar scale, 1 = *Strongly disagree* and 7 = *Strongly Agree*.

Next, the thirteen statements related to the mediators – Predictability, Logical Thinking, Freedom, and Creativity – were presented. Participants had to indicate how much they agreed or not with each statement, using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 7 = *Strongly Agree*). An example of the statements presented on this topic is: *"In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would like to apply creativity."*

To further understand what participants believed to be the most critical aspects of their dream job, I asked them to rate, from 1 = *Not at all important* to 7 = *Extremely important*, job-

related words. These were: “control,” “undefined tasks,” “freedom,” “high salary,” “defined tasks,” “work-life balance,” “employee benefits,” “hierarchy,” “novelty,” “variety of tasks,” “flexibility,” “predictability,” “remote work option.” Still on this topic and focusing on the type of tasks the participants would like to endeavor in a company, an open-ended question was presented. On this, participants were asked to share the tasks and responsibilities they would enjoy in a company.

After these, the financial manipulation check questions were presented, and participants were asked to rate on a 7-point bipolar scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) the following:

“To what extent did you think about your current financial situation while making your choices on the Job Advertisement task?” and “To what extent did you feel financially constrained while making your choices on the Job Advertisement task?”

Next to this stage of the questionnaire, I included the 3 Tasks related to the moderators. On the first, the Six-Item version of the Need for Cognition Scale (Coelho, Hanel and Wolf 2018) was presented. On the second, Traits of Creative Personality were measured through the following statements (based on 7-point bipolar scales from 1 = *Totally Disagree* to 7 = *Totally Agree*):

1. I am a creative person.; 2. In general, I have a preference for tasks and activities that require creativity; 3. I consider myself to be quite creative; 4. I have a natural inclination to be creative; 5. In general, I enjoy using my creative side; 6. I have a natural tendency for creativity; and 7. I have a creative personality.

On the third task, I asked participants to complete the short version of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark and Tellegen 1988), from 1 = *Never* to 7 = *Always*. Additionally, participants were asked to rate, from 1 = *Totally Disagree* to 7 = *Totally Agree*, how much they identified themselves with the statements:

1. The Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected my life; 2. During this pandemic, I always felt in control of my life; 3. During the pandemic, I always felt motivated to work; 4. The Covid-

19 situation made me feel financially constrained; and 5. During this pandemic I found the time to learn new things or get things in order.

The final part of the survey included two stages. I first asked participants about which job position and industry they had in mind while responding to the job-related questions. The second part was formed by demographic questions about gender, age, income source, monthly household income, respondent's monthly disposable income, nationality, and English level.

The complete questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1 (p. 30).

4. Hypothesis Testing and Discussion

Manipulation check. I averaged the manipulation check items to form a manipulation checked index. I performed an Independent Samples T-Test with conditions (Constraint vs. Control) as the independent variable and the index above as the dependent variable. There was no difference between conditions in terms of how financially constrained people felt ($t(212) = .62, p = .54$), even though the 107 constrained participants ($M = 3.36, SD = 1.55$) showed a higher manipulation than the 107 in-control ones ($M = 3.21, SD = 1.73$). This aspect is a limitation of the current study, and the interpretation of the following analyses should take this null result into account.

Given that the manipulation was not successful, I explored effects based on subjective feelings financial constraints. Namely, I examined the following main dependent variables: Job choice, Degree of Preference for Job 1 vs. Job 2, and Confidence behind this preference.

It is important to note that all the variables comprising multiple items were averaged into indexes. With this in mind, for interpretation, when indexes are referred to is because this transformation was applied. Of note, all scales were reliable (Cronbach's alphas $\geq .7$).

4.1. Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

Hypothesis 1: Feelings of financial constraint are positively related to a preference for well-defined tasks.

4.1.1. Job Choice

Financial Constraint Condition vs. Control Condition. I performed a Chi-Squared Test with the Conditions (Constraint vs. Control) as the independent variable and Job Choice as the dependent variable to measure if inducing feelings of financial constraint would lead to the choice of well-defined jobs. There was no difference between conditions regarding the job choice as no statistical significance was found, $\chi^2(1, N=214) = .39, p = .534$. For this reason, we cannot truly validate the effect of feelings of Financial Constraints over the dichotomous choice for ill-defined tasks (Job 1) or well-defined ones (Job 2). It is essential to highlight that, in general, participants showed a higher tendency in choosing Job 1 ($N = 156$) rather than Job 2 ($N = 58$), proving that generally, participants tended to choose ill-defined job tasks.

Moderators. a Moderation Model Analysis using PROCESS (Hayes 2018) was used for each of the three Moderators at study – Need for Cognition, Traits of Creative Personality, Covid-19 – to further understand if each moderator influences the probability of feelings of financial constraints affecting the choice for ill-defined tasks (Job 1) or well-defined (Job 2). For each, the dependent variable was Job Choice, the independent variable was the Conditions (Constraint vs. Control), and the moderators' indexes the respective moderator variable. Namely, I tested the following models:

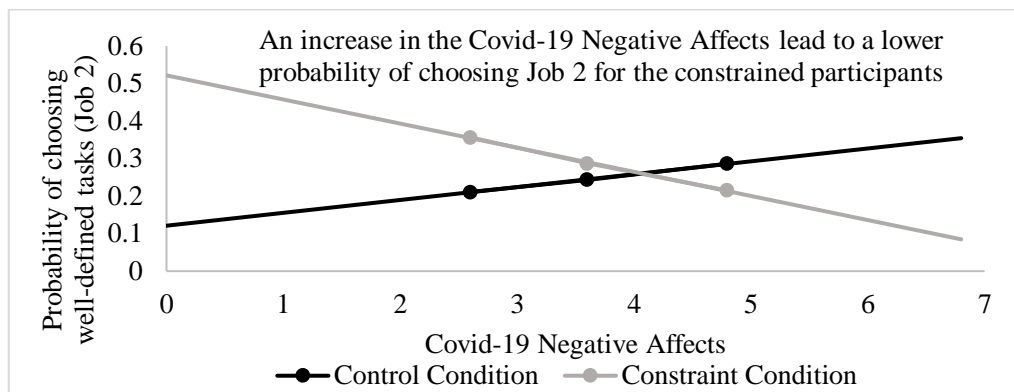
Equation 1

$$\text{Job choice} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \text{Condition} + \beta_2 \times \text{Moderator Index} + \beta_3 \times (\text{Condition} \times \text{Moderator Index}) + \varepsilon$$

The results obtained with all moderation models, except the Negative Affect of Covid-19, showed no interaction between the moderators and the two conditions. Therefore, most moderators did not significantly change the probability of Job Choice between conditions. *Need for Cognition*. ($p = .72$); *Traits of Creative Personality* ($p = .13$), *Covid-19 Positive Affect* ($p = .38$).

Covid-19 Negative Affect. This moderator proved to change the probability of Job Choice between conditions (Nagelkerke's $R^2 = .02, p = 0.09$). When analyzing this effect, I

concluded that contrary to my predictions, the increase in the Covid-19 Negative Affect for the participants in the control condition led to lower probability in choosing Job 2 (well-defined). Inversely, the increase in this moderator for the participants in the financial constraint condition led to a lower probability of choosing Job 2 (Graphic 1, produced by SPSS). These results may mirror that the lack of control brought by the pandemic when paired with feelings of financial constraint make people compensate for the lack of control in an unpredicted way: seeking ill-defined tasks, where they have the freedom to define processes and final solutions.



Graphic 1: Covid-19 Negative Affects and Job Choice between Conditions.

4.1.2. Degree of Preference between Job 1 vs. Job 2

Financial Constraint Condition vs. Control Condition. An Independent Samples T-test with the two Conditions (Constraint vs. Control) as the independent variable and the Degree of Preference between the two Jobs as the dependent one was performed to more accurately assess if inducing feelings of financial constraint would lead to a higher preference for one job over the other. However, and in line with previous findings, there was no significant effect of feeling financially constrained over the degree of preference between jobs, $t(212) = .614$, $p = .54$ (constrained participants: $M = 35.35$; $SD = 26.38$; control participants: $M = 33.12$; $SD = 26.63$).

Moderators. As in the previous variable, I performed a Moderation Model Analysis using PROCESS (Hayes 2018) for each of the three moderators at study to further understand if these influence the effect of feelings of financial constraints over the degree of preference for one job over the other. Each model was:

Equation 2

Deg. Preference = $\beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \text{Condition} + \beta_2 \times \text{Moderator Index} + \beta_3 \times (\text{Condition} \times \text{Moderator Index}) + \varepsilon$

Need for Cognition. A moderation model considered the Conditions (Constraint vs. Control) as the independent variable, the Degree of Preference as the dependent variable, and the Need for Cognition index as moderator.

According to the results from PROCESS (Hayes 2018), the overall moderation model had significant effects ($F(3, 209) = 13.26, p < .001, R^2 = .16$). However, the overall interaction effect was not significant: $B = -.44, t(209), p = .50$. In this interaction model, Conditions proved not to significantly effect the Degree of Preference ($B = 13.13, t(209) = .66, p = .51$). In contrast, the Need for Cognition demonstrated to negative and significantly affect the Degree of Preference ($B = -10.44, t(209) = -.68, p < .001$), meaning that, as expected, people with higher levels of this trait present higher degree of preference for ill-defined tasks (Job 1).

Traits of Creative Personality. This moderation model considered the Conditions (Constraint vs. Control) applied as the independent variable and the Degree of Preference as the dependent variable, with the Traits of Creative Personality index as moderator.

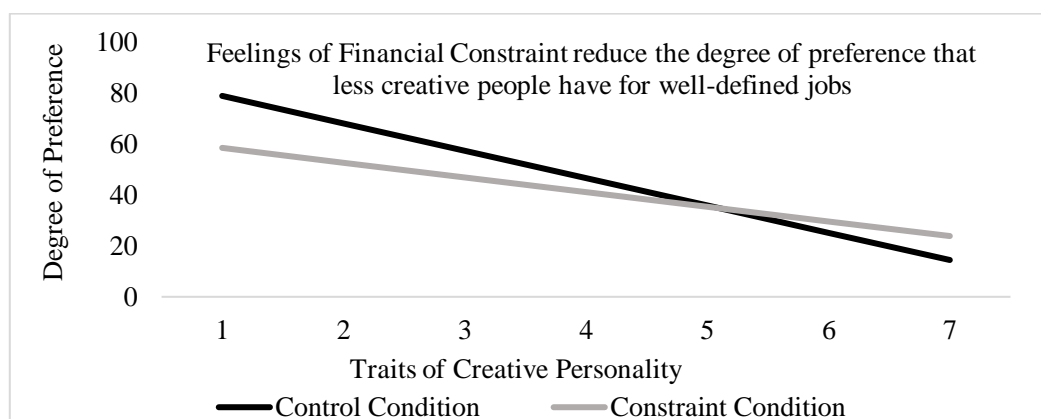
In this case, the results showed that the overall moderation model had significant effects ($F(3, 209) = 14.10, p < .001, R^2 = .17$) and that overall interaction effect was also marginally significant: $B = 4.96, t(209) = 1.93, p = .06$.

However, the Conditions proved to marginally predict the Degree of Preference in a negative way ($B = -25.33, t(209) = -1.86, p = .06$) which, unexpectedly, shows that financial constraints lead to a preference for ill-defined tasks (Job 1). The Traits of Creative Personality are also a predictor of Degree of Preference and, as expected, creative people have a higher Degree of Preference for ill-defined tasks (Job 1) ($B = -10.72, t(209) = 1.92, p < .001$).

I used a floodlight analysis (Spiller, et al. 2012) to analyze the conditional effects of experimental conditions on the degree of preference at one standard deviation below and one standard deviation above the mean of Traits of Creative Personality. This analysis revealed that:

- At one standard deviation below the mean (3.75, $B = -6.72$ ($t(209) = -1.74$, $p = 0.17$), there was a negative but not significant coefficient for the effect of condition on preference, indicating that less creative people in the control condition preferred the well-defined tasks (Job 2) more as compared to their counterparts in the financial constraint condition.
- At one standard deviation above the mean (6.30, $B = .90$, $t(209) = 1.31$, $p = 0.20$), there is a positive but not significant coefficient for effect of condition on preference, indicating that higher creative people in the control condition preferred the ill-defined tasks (Job 1) more as compared to the participants in the financial constraint condition.

I further used the Johnson-Neyman 1 technique - PROCESS (Hayes 2018) - to identify the moderator's values at which the effect of conditions is significant. The results showed that for levels of Traits of Creative Personality lower than 3.04, the effect of this moderator is marginally significant ($.08 < p < .10$, $11.58 < B < -16.83$). With this in mind, I proceeded with the graphic representation of these findings (Graphic 2). As expected, creative people, which generally prefer the ill-defined tasks more, tend to do so to a lesser extent when they are constrained. In other words, feelings of financial constraint reduce the preference that creative people have for ill-defined tasks. However, contrary to what I predicted, these also reduce the preference that non-creative people have for well-defined tasks, showing higher weighting.



Graphic 2: Influence of Traits of Creative Personality over the Degree of Preference for Jobs in both Conditions. (0 = "I 100% prefer Job 1" (ill-defined) and 100 = "I 100% prefer Job 2" (well-defined))

Covid-19. To test if how participants felt during the current pandemic affected the causal relation between Degree of Preference (dependent variable) and the two Conditions (Constraint vs. Control, independent variable), a model for the Positive Affect and another for the Negative Affect as moderators were built.

Contrary to previous findings, the Negative Affects did not significantly change the effect of financial constraints on the degree of preference between jobs, $F(3,209) = 1.03$, $p = .38$, $R^2 = .01$. For the Positive Affect the models' effect was marginally significant ($F(3,209) = 2.50$, $p = .06$, $R^2 = .03$) but the interaction model was not ($B = -5.79$, $t(209) = -1.36$, $p = .18$). In sum, contrary to what I expected, the emotions related to the current pandemic did not seem to impact the effect of feelings of financial constraint over the degree of preference for one Job over the other.

4.1.3. Confidence in the Degree of Preference for a Job

Financial Constraint Condition vs. Control Condition. An Independent Samples T-test with the Conditions (Constraint vs. Control) as the independent variable and the Confidence in the Degree of Preference for a Job as the dependent variable. This test was done to assess if financially constraint participants showed to be less sure of their preferences.

Even though the 107 participants in the constrained condition ($M = 68.9$ I; $SD = 25.99$) showed a lower level of confidence when making their preference for the jobs when compared to the 107 in the control condition ($M = 70.8$ I; $SD = 26.46$), there was no significant difference between conditions in terms of confidence in the preference, $t(212) = -.524$, $p = .601$.

Moderators. To test if the moderators influenced the effect of feelings of financial constraints over the confidence behind the preference for jobs, I again recurred to the PROCESS Moderation Model Analysis (Hayes 2018).

For all models, the dependent variable was the Confidence behind participants' preference, and the independent variable the two conditions (Constraint vs. Control). The Moderators corresponded to their indexes. Each model was written as:

Equation 3

$$\text{Deg. Confidence} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \text{Condition} + \beta_2 \times \text{Moderator Index} + \beta_3 \times (\text{Condition} \times \text{Moderator Index}) + \varepsilon$$

Apart from the Need for Cognition, none of the moderators significantly changed the effect of conditions over the confidence in the preference for well-defined vs. ill-defined tasks. (*Traits of Creative Personality*: $F(3,209) = 1.02$, $p = .38$, $R^2 = .12$; *Covid-19 Positive Affect*: $F(3,209) = .83$, $p = .48$, $R^2 = .01$; *Covid-19 Negative Affect*: $F(3,209) = .41$, $p = .75$, $R^2 = .06$).

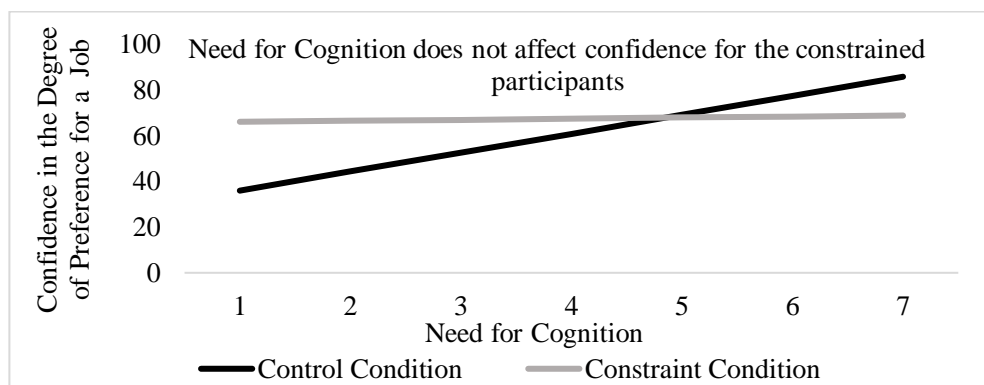
Need for Cognition. The results show that the overall moderation model had significant effects ($F(3,209) = 3.95$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .23$) and that overall interaction model was also significant: $B = -11.06$, $t(209) = -2.72$, $p = 0.07$.

Additionally, both variables showed positive and statistically significant coefficient (Conditions: $B = 55.7$, $t(209) = 2.65$, $p = .009$; *Need for Cognition*: $B = 10.27$, $t(209) = 3.39$, $p < .001$). Therefore, contrary to what I expected, feelings of financial constraint and the tendency to enjoy complex tasks increase confidence. Further, I used a floodlight analysis (Spiller, et al. 2012) to analyze the conditional effects of experimental conditions on confidence at one standard deviation below and one standard deviation above the mean of Need for Cognition traits. This analysis revealed that:

- At one standard deviation below the mean (4.33, $B = 7.79$, $t(209) = 1.60$, $p = 0.10$), there was a positive but not significant coefficient for the effect of condition on confidence, indicating that people in the constrained condition that have a lower need for cognition had higher confidence when compared to the participants in the control condition.
- At one standard deviation above the mean (6.00, $B = -10.63$, $t(209) = -2.12$, $p = 0.04$), there is a negative and significant coefficient for the effect on condition on confidence

indicating that people with higher needs for cognition in the constrained condition were less confident than their counterparts in the control condition.

Using Johnson-Neyman 1 (Hayes 2018), I identified that for values below 4.02 ($42.80 < B < 7.33$; $.01 < p < .06$) and above 5.54 ($-5.56 < B < -21.68$; $.06 < p < .01$) the effect of condition is significant. Interestingly, the graphic representation of these findings (Graphic 3) shows that when participants experience feelings of financial constraint, the Need for Cognition does not affect confidence. However, and as expected, for participants in the control condition, the higher the Need for Cognition, the higher the confidence behind Job's preference. These findings might reflect that to compensate for lack of control induced by feelings of constraint, people carefully evaluate every scenario, and for this are more confident about their preferences even when they do not show a propensity in liking complex tasks and applying much thought (lower Need for Cognition).



Graphic 3: Influence of Need for Cognition over Confidence in both Conditions

4.1.4. Mediators

Since there was no causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables Job Choice, Degree of Preference, and Confidence, I did not test for mediators' effect. Nonetheless, I tested if there was an effect of conditions on the different mediators.

For this, I performed Independent Samples T-tests with conditions as the independent variables and each of the following indexes as the dependent ones: Freedom, Predictability,

Logical Thinking, and Creativity. However, no significant differences between conditions were found for all Mediators except Freedom. I further unpack these results below.

Predictability. ($t(212) = 1.40, p = .16$): participants in the constrained condition ($M = 4.83; SD = 1.03$) showed a marginally higher preference for tasks that imply predictability than the in-control participants ($M = 4.63; SD = 1.06$).

Logical Thinking. ($t(212) = -.11, p = .91$): in-control ($M = 5.00; SD = 1.14$) and financially constraint ($M = 4.98; SD = .93$) participants showed a similar fondness for tasks that imply logical thinking.

Creativity. ($t(212) = -1.24, p = .22$): participants in the control condition ($M = 5.77; SD = 1.10$) showed a marginally higher preference for job tasks in which they can use creativity tasks than the financially constraint participants ($M = 5.60; SD = 1.03$).

Freedom. A significant effect of feelings of financial constraint over freedom was found, $t(212) = -2.12, p = .04$. As predicted, participants in the control condition ($M = 5.60, SD = .88$) showed a slightly higher preference for tasks in which they have freedom than the constrained participants ($M = 5.33, SD = .97$). Therefore, in line with my hypothesis feelings of financial constraints may lead to the compensatory search for tasks involving less freedom and autonomy to restore a sense of control.

4.2. Financial Constraints and Hesitancy in Asking for Help from Others

Hypothesis 2: Feelings of Financial Constraint are positively related to a hesitancy in asking for help from others.

An Independent Samples t-test was run to test for the interaction between the two variables. The Conditions (Constraint vs. Control) were the independent variable, and the Asking for Help index the dependent variable. According to the results obtained, there is a significant difference between conditions in the hesitancy in asking for help ($t(212) = -2.55, p = .012$). Interestingly, participants in the control condition showed higher hesitancy in asking

for help ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.08$) than the constraint ones ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.28$). When measuring the correlation between the two variables, the results obtained show that, contrary to my hypothesis and previous literature, feelings of financial constraint are negatively related to a hesitancy in asking for help, $r(212) = -.17$, $p = .012$. This finding may evidence that, as a compensatory behavior for the lack of personal control induced by feelings of financial constraints, people prefer to have help from others to be reassured about the control of their work outcome.

4.3. Exploratory Analysis

Instructional Manipulation Check. Thirty-nine participants failed the Instructional Manipulation Check, leaving a sample of 175 responses (89 constrained and 86 in-control respondents), which led to small fluctuations in the values of results in which most patterns and significances previously attained remained approximately unchanged, except for the following:

Covid-19 Negative Affect. The model that tested for the probability of Covid-19 Negative Affect influencing Job Choice between conditions became not significant ($p = .11$).

Traits of Creative Personality. The model that tested for the conditional effects of Traits of Creative Personality over the causal relation between Conditions and the Degree of Preference became not significant: $B = 4.88$, $t(171) = 1.63$, $p = .11$.

Need for Cognition. The model that tested for the conditional effects of Need for Cognition over the causal relation between Conditions and Confidence became marginally significant and at levels above 6.12 ($-10.09 < B < -16.97$; $.08 < p < .06$). Nonetheless, the conclusions are the same: when participants are constrained, confidence is not influenced by the need for Cognition.

Freedom. The statistical effect of financial constraints over the preference for tasks that imply freedom became not statistically significant ($t(173) = -1.52$, $p = .13$).

Even though the participants' manipulation was not successful, meaning that participants did not feel more constrained in one condition than in the other, I further validated the impact of Feelings of Financial Constraints over Personal Control and investigated the statistical correlation between how much the participants felt financially constrained while answering the survey – tested for through the Financial Manipulation Check, with the Job Choice.

Personal Control. For this measure, I looked into people who wrote about their financial situation and checked whether they indeed wrote about constraints or not. When noticing that many did not experience feelings of financial constraint, I coded this open-ended question in terms of participants who wrote about feeling financially constrained (=1) and participants who did not (=0). An example of a response for each of these codes is:

1 = “I feel financially comfortable because of my parents’ jobs, but at the same time I am quite careful on my spending. Most of the times, I feel I cannot buy what I really want.”

0 = “I feel financially comfortable, and I have the financial resources to live a great life and to live the way I want.”

Independent Samples T-test. The results obtained showed a significant difference for both control ($t(105) = -4.40, p < .001$) and freedom ($t(105) = -4.01, p < .001$). As predicted, the 55 constrained participants showed lower levels of control ($M = 5.09, SD = 1.351$) and freedom ($M = 4.84, SD = 1.05$) than the 52 in-control ones (respectively: $M = 6.00, SD = .66$; $M = 5.62, SD = .95$). Therefore, Feelings of Financial constraint proved to decrease personal control.

Job choice and stated Feelings of Financial Constraint. To test for the statistical relationship between the two variables, I built a Binary Logistic Regression Model with Job Choice as the dependent variable and stated Feelings of Financial Constraint during the survey as the predictor one:

Equation 4:

$$\text{Job Choice} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \text{Feelings of Financial Constraint} + \varepsilon_i$$

Results indicated that the model was not significant ($R^2 = .00, p = .80$), meaning that the stated feelings of financial constraint did not affect Job choice.

5. Limitations

The results obtained with the study's main dependent variables Job Choice, Degree of Preference between Job 1 (ill-defined) and Job 2 (well-defined), and Confidence behind this preference proved a lack of effect of Feelings of Financial Constraints over a Preference for Well-Defined Tasks. However, these results were reached in a setting where manipulating participants was not achieved, and for that reason, they may not reflect reality.

Therefore, this work project presents some limitations that future research can address, which are mainly related to the manipulation of feelings of financial constraint. There are three key reasons for which I believe manipulation was not achieved: the environment in which participants took the survey; the method used to give control to some participants and to constrain others financially and how the thought on the financial situation was being invoked; the description of the two Jobs.

Because of the current Pandemic situation, I had to use an online platform to conduct the study. Consequently, and even though this was part of Nova's Behavioral Lab and that I asked participants to complete the survey in a single sitting with no distractions, the environment in which individuals took the survey could not be controlled to the extent that it could have been at the University's laboratory.

To mitigate the limitation that may have arisen from how I separated the two conditions, which may not have been sufficient to effectively make the participants think about their Financial Situation throughout the survey, I suggest two solutions. The first is that future research adds a manipulation item. Our study asked participants in the Financially Constrained condition to think about their current financial situation and how this limits their control and freedom. Building upon this, and using a method suggested by Cutright (2012), future research

may also ask participants in the two conditions to think about something negative that happened to their finances in the past month. However, the situation to be described must be an effect of something the participants in the control condition intentionally did. On the other hand, for the participants in the Constraint condition, this situation should not be deliberate nor a result of something they did. After this, and throughout the entire study, more appealing aspects of participants' financial situation with a job scenario can be applied to recall this aspect and effectively manipulate participants continuously.

Regarding the Job Description and given that I have built them according to an adaptation of the definitions of well-defined and ill-defined tasks proposed by Moreau & Engeset (2016), future research may benefit from applying a real and immersive scenario. The goal is to better measure the ads' aspects that caught the attention of participants and influenced their choice.

An aspect that I consider to be pivotal to investigate further is the reason and nature behind the statistically significant relationship between Feelings of Financial Constraint and the Hesitancy in Asking for Help, which goes beyond this study's scope. My findings, even when subject to limitations, suggest a negative correlation between the two aspects. Contrariwise, prior literature has proven that remembering money can make people more hesitant in asking for help. Therefore, and since no prior study has tested for the relationship between Asking for Help with lack of personal control due to financial constraints, in such a direct way, being able to draw further conclusions on this matter may be of organizational relevance.

6. Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

Through one study, I analyzed the impact that Feelings of Financial Constraints have on the Preference for Well-Defined tasks and on the Hesitancy in Asking for Help. Nevertheless, because the participants' manipulation was not successful, and for this, I cannot assure that the results reflect reality.

Regarding Hypothesis 1, Feelings of Financial Constraint did not significantly affect the preference for well-defined tasks. Further, when testing for the moderators' impact in this effect, the confidence behind the job preference proved not to be influenced by the Need for Cognition for the constrained participants.

As for Hypothesis 2, the relation between Financial Constraints and hesitancy in asking for help from others proved negative, contrary to what was hypothesized. Therefore, people may prefer to rely on others to feel in control when experiencing feelings of financial constraint. For this reason, further research could enable companies to adjust their working environment as a way to foment an open place of discussion and share of ideas.

The relationship between Feelings of Financial Constraints - which proved to generate a perceived lack of personal control - and Job Choice is not as straightforward as expected. Therefore, I cannot confidently recommend alternative ways to better address organizations' recruitment process, with the explicit goal of leveraging their chance of finding critical human resources. Therefore, a more comprehensive questionnaire could be built to guarantee efficient manipulation in the search for significant conclusions.

Notwithstanding, Feelings of Financial Constraints' impact on other fields (Moreau and Engeset 2016; Tully, Hershfield and Meyvis 2015; Paley, Tully and Sharma 2019) may still be a strong influencer of other compensatory behaviors other than the one considered in this study. Therefore, it may be relevant to keep expanding this topic and shed new light on how people re-built personal control lost due to financial constraints.

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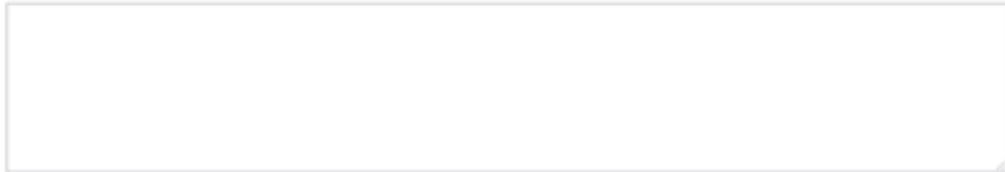
8. Appendix 1: Complete Questionnaire

It is essential to highlight that the in-control participants did not respond to the manipulation exercise and the control and freedom questions for interpretation reasons. Simultaneously, their questions did not include the statements that would lead them to think about their financial situation, i.e., “*Given the financial situation you are currently in*” and “*keeping in mind my financial situation.*”


Now, please describe your current financial situation. To assist you during this reflection exercise you may consider the answers to the following questions in your description:

Do you have to be careful with how you spend your money? Do you sometimes feel as though you cannot spend your money on what you want? Would you consider yourself financially constrained? Would you consider yourself financially comfortable? Do you feel as though you have the financial resources to live the way you want?

Please take a few minutes and describe your financial situation in as much detail as possible.



Please list the aspects of your daily life and spending decisions that are affected by your current financial situation.



Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

Given the financial situation you are currently in, to what extent do you feel you can do what you want?

I can never do what I want							I can always do what I want
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

Given the financial situation you are currently in, to what extent do you feel you have control over your decisions concerning what you do in your day to day life?

Not in control at all							Completely in control
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

For which job advertisement would you most likely apply? Please choose one of the options below

- ☐ Job 1
☐ Job 2

To what extent would you prefer one job over the other? Use the slider below to indicate your degree of preference for one option over the other.

I 100% prefer Job 1		I am indifferent or undecided between Job 1 and Job 2		I 100% prefer Job 2
0		50		100
<input type="range" value="50"/>				

How confident are you about your preference above?

0% confident				100% Confident
0		50		100
<input type="range" value="50"/>				

How happy do you think you would be with Job 1?

Very unhappy	Moderately unhappy	Slightly unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Slightly happy	Moderately happy	Very happy
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How happy do you think you would be with Job 2?

Very unhappy	Moderately unhappy	Slightly unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Slightly happy	Moderately happy	Very happy
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

In job 1, I would feel that my work has meaning.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In job 2, I would feel that my work has meaning.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer the following questions concerning the job search situation you have just read, keeping in mind your current financial situation:

In this situation, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would feel uneasy asking for help from others (e.g., my colleagues or supervisor).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In this situation, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would feel hesitant to ask for advice from others (e.g., my colleagues or supervisor).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In this situation, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would not feel comfortable asking questions concerning work from others (e.g., my colleagues or supervisor).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In this situation, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would hesitate to ask for guidance from others (e.g., my colleagues or supervisor).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

Please select the answer that best describes you or your preferences, keeping in mind the job search situation you have just read and your current financial situation

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would prefer to have freedom.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would enjoy having flexibility.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would like to be autonomous.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would prefer more certainty.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would want to avoid ambiguity.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would like to have a very clear and unambiguous idea concerning what to do.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would find comfort in predictability.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would prefer to be methodical.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would like to be logical and precise.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would like to use rationality.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would like to apply creativity.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

Now thinking about your dream job please rate the degree of importance that each of the points below are important to you in a job in general

	Not at all important	Very unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Uncertain	Slightly important	Very important	Extremely important
Control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Undefined tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Freedom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Defined tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employee benefits (i.e. insurance)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hierarchy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Novelty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Variety of tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Predictability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Remote work option	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Keeping in mind your dream job, briefly describe the type of tasks and responsibilities that you would enjoy in an organisation.

Please be as specific as possible:

In the situation I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would like to be innovative.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the scenario I just read, and keeping in mind my financial situation, I would like to use my imagination.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

To what extent did you think about your current financial situation while making your choices on the Job Advertisement task?

Not at all						Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent did you feel financially constrained while making your choices on the Job Advertisement task?

Not at all						Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Task 3

For each of the statements below, please indicate whether or not the statement is characteristic of you or of what you believe. Please notice that these statements refer to you so think about how each statement applies to you in general, in your day-to-day life.

1. I would prefer complex to simple problems.

Extremely uncharacteristic of me	Very uncharacteristic of me	Somewhat uncharacteristic of me	Uncertain	Somewhat characteristic of me	Very characteristic of me	Extremely characteristic of me
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking.

Extremely uncharacteristic of me	Very uncharacteristic of me	Somewhat uncharacteristic of me	Uncertain	Somewhat characteristic of me	Very characteristic of me	Extremely characteristic of me
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Thinking is not my idea of fun.

Extremely uncharacteristic of me	Very uncharacteristic of me	Somewhat uncharacteristic of me	Uncertain	Somewhat characteristic of me	Very characteristic of me	Extremely characteristic of me
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

4. I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities.

Extremely uncharacteristic of me	Very uncharacteristic of me	Somewhat uncharacteristic of me	Uncertain	Somewhat characteristic of me	Very characteristic of me	Extremely characteristic of me
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems.

Extremely uncharacteristic of me	Very uncharacteristic of me	Somewhat uncharacteristic of me	Uncertain	Somewhat characteristic of me	Very characteristic of me	Extremely characteristic of me
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. I prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought.

Extremely uncharacteristic of me	Very uncharacteristic of me	Somewhat uncharacteristic of me	Uncertain	Somewhat characteristic of me	Very characteristic of me	Extremely characteristic of me
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Task 4

Please rate your creativity

1. I am a creative person.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. In general, I have a preference for tasks and activities that require creativity.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

3. I consider myself to be quite creative.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. I have a natural inclination to be creative.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. In general, I enjoy using my creative side.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. I have a natural tendency for creativity.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. I have a creative personality.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Task 5

Help us screen out random clicking. You can do this by skipping this and moving on to "Task 6".

Do not click on the scale items that are labelled from 1 to 9. Instead, please check the small box hidden in the bottom of the screen. Scroll down to see it. After clicking that box, click on "Task 6" to continue to the next and final part of the survey (final 2-3 minutes).

How often do you go to bed early (before 10pm)?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always



Task 6

Think about how you have been feeling during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Right now, to what extent do you feel...

	Never	Almost never	Rarely	Uncertain	Often	Very Often	Always
Upset	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hostile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ashamed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inspired	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nervous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determined	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attentive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Afraid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Active	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Finally, what better characterises you

1. The Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected my life.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. During this pandemic, I always felt in control of my life.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. During the pandemic, I always felt motivated to work.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

4. The Covid-19 situation made me feel financially constrained.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. During this pandemic I found the time to learn new things or get things in order.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer the following questions

Earlier, you imagined that you found two job openings in your favourite industry. What industry did you have in mind while imagining yourself in the scenario (if any)?

What type of job position (if any) did you have in mind while imagining yourself in the scenario?

Are you currently looking for a job?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you currently have a job?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Overall work experience (years):

Highest level of education completed

Gender

Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

Age

Source of Income

Household Income (monthly)

Your own Disposable Income (monthly)

Nationality

Mother tongue

How do you characterise your level of English

- ☐ Mother Tongue
- ☐ Beginner (A0)
- ☐ Elementary (A1-A2)
- ☐ Intermediate (B1-B2)
- ☐ Advanced (C1)
- ☐ Proficiency (C2)

Rate the Level of English of the current survey

Very Difficult ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Easy

What do you think is the purpose of this study?

Do you have any comments about this survey?

Financial Constraints and Preference for Well-Defined Tasks

The general purpose of this research is to help us understand the impact that financial constraints can have over the preference for structured or unstructured jobs. Some people participating in this study were prompted to think about their current financial situation and how it constrains their life, some people were not prompted to do so. Our reasoning is that people who wrote about current financial constraints would have their financial situation in mind, and how it limits their day to day life and decisions (to a smaller or greater extent).

Financial constraint might restrict people's lives--from the choice of what goods to buy to the range of things they can do freely. Prior literature suggests that financial constraints might lead people to feel as they are not entirely in control of their life.

Additionally, various studies have proven that when people feel that they are not fully in control of their life, they tend to compensate for this by engaging in control-restorative behaviours. In other words, people can compensate for a perceived lack of control by doing things that help them restore their lost sense of control, psychologically. For instance, consumers with a low sense of control tend to prefer brands that are market leaders, because this imbues them with a sense of security and agency.

In this study, we explore whether a perceived lack of control due to perceived financial constraints influences people's preferences for jobs – namely, whether people would prefer jobs that limit uncertainty, and are very well defined, as compared to jobs in which tasks are more uncertain.

Our prediction is that when people perceive a lack of control over their lives due to their financial constraints, this will lead them to prefer well-defined tasks, as a way to compensate for their threatened sense of control. In other words, people might prefer well-defined tasks because they need to re-establish the sense that “things are under control” when a lack of control over one's life is due to current financial constraints.

The implications of this study are important: it is possible that during socio-economic circumstances in which people experience more financial constraints, people on average would tend to prefer certain types of jobs over others. This means that companies offering jobs that are not as well-defined are at a disadvantage in finding interesting candidates. We aim to provide suggestions on how to frame job offerings accordingly.

Thank you so much for helping us address this interesting and important research question!